

A MILITARY DIALOGUE.

ARMY REFORM.

SCENE.—The Canteen of the Rutlandshire Regiment, at Down-boro', an airy, plastered hall with high windows. A bar at one end is backed by a rampart of beer barrels. A double line of barrack tables and benches runs down the room. The hour is 5 p.m. At one of the tables sits Mr. W. WILSON, late Private in the regiment, in all the glory of a new check suit of an aggressive pattern, a crimson tie, a horseshoe pin, an aluminium watch chain, a grey "bowler" and a button-hole of violets. Privates W. and G. SMITH, P. BRADY, E. DUDD and other men of H Company are at the table, or standing near it.

Mr. Wilson (passing round a great tin measure containing beer, after taking a preliminary pull himself). Of course I do 'ear more, being in the smoke, than you 'ear down in this provincial 'ole; and there's generals and statesmen and such-like comes and stays at our place, and when they gets tied up in a knot over any military question, as often as not they says, "Let's ask WILSON the undergardener. 'E's a hex-military man; 'e's a 'ighly intel-lergent feller;" and I generally gets them out of their difficulty.

Pte. W. Smith. D'ye know anything about this army reform?

Mr. Wilson (with lofty scorn). Do I know anything about it?

Pte. G. Smith. D'ye think they 're goin' to make a good job of it?

Mr. Wilson. Naaw, And why? Becos they 're goin' the wrong wai to work. They 're arskin' the opinion of per-feshernal hexperts and other sich ignoramuses, and ain't goin' to the fountain 'ead. Oo's the backbone of the English service?

Pte. P. Brady. The Oirish Private.

Mr. Wilson. Right you are, my 'Ibernian—always subitoot-ing British for H Irish—and the British Compiny is the finest horganisation in the world. Give the Private a free 'and and a

rise of pay, and make the Compiny the model of the army, and then yer can put all the hexperts and all the Ryle Commissions and their Reports to bed.

Pte. Dudd. As how?

Mr. Wilson. As 'ow, yer old thiek head? It's as plain as a pike-staff. Taike this question of responsibility. When some one comes a bloomer, and the paipers all rise 'ell, the civilian toff, 'oos a sort of a Commander-in-Chief in a Sunday coat and a chimney-pot 'at, 'e says, "It ain't me. Arsk the real Commander-in-Chief," and the Feeld-Marshal, 'e says, "Arsk

the Hadjutant-General," and the Hadjutant - General, 'e says, "Arsk the Hordnance bloke." Now in the Compiny there ain't none of that. If the Colonel goin' round at kit inspection finds the beds badly made up, or jags and sight - protectors deficient, or 'oles in the men's socks, 'e goes fierce for the Captin' and threatens to stop 'is leave; and the Captin' don't say, "Oh, it's the Had-jutant, or the Quarter - master, or the Chaplain what 's to blame," no, 'e gives the subalterns and the coloured-sergeant beans, and they slip it in to the sergeants and corprils in charge of squads, and the beds is set up straight, and the men put down for jags and sight-protectors, and the 'oles in the socks is mended.

Private W. Smith. That's so, old pal. What else would you recermend?

Mr. Wilson (reach-ing out for the mea-

sure). Thank yer. This 'ere army-reforming's a dry job. Now as to the metherd of attack. When the regiment goes out feld-firing the henemy's a line of hearthenware pots, touched up on the sly by the markers with a dash of white; the captains count the telergraph posts up the range and give the exact distance; and the men goes 'opping along in line like crows on a ploughed field, the sergeantes a-naggin' 'em about the 'Ithe position and the corprils calling them back to pick up empty cartridge cases. Is that the wai that you, GEORGE SMITH, and you, BILL, and you, PAT, used ter creep up to the rabbit warrens when we used ter go out in the herly morning to assist the farmers to keep down the ground gime—poaching, the colonel called it? No, we hexecuted wide turning move-



Working Man sitting on the steps of a big house in, say, Russell Square, smoking pipe. A mate passes by with plumbing tools, &c.

Man with tools. "HULLO, JIM! WOT ARE YER DOIN' 'ERE! CARETAKIN'!"

Man on steps. "No. I 'M THE HOWNER, 'ERE."

Man with tools. "'OW 'S THAT!"

Man on steps. "WHY, I DID A BIT O' PLUMBING IN THE 'OUSE, AN' I TOOK THE PLACE IN PART PAYMENT FOR THE JOB."

ments and never showed no more than the tip of a nose. Let drill of attack alone, I say, and develope the sporting instinct of the private.

Omnes. 'Ear, 'ear!

Mr. Wilson. And this matter of mobility. Why, if you or me or any of us was on furlough at 'Ampstead or Margit, we was never off a 'orse's or a 'moke's back as long as the dills larsted. Give us the brass, and we'll find the mobility.

Pte. W. Smith. Why don't yer write to Lord SALISBERRY, and give him your ideas?

Mr. Wilson. I shall. A few hintelligent ex-privates in the cabinet, a rise of pay for privates and two days' rabbiting, and a trip to Margit every week would sive the British army.

N. N.-D.

THE BOOK OF BEAUTY.

A GREAT THOUGHT FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

SECOND SERIES.

I.—THE MEDIEVAL SECTION.

(With the Author's compliments to Mr. Maurice Hewlett.)

JANUARY 1ST, 2ND.—But at the high board sat My Lord de DURDANS, named of his enemies ARCHIBALD YEA-AND-NAY, for that first he would and then he would not, for over-asking. And by him was Sir HENRY COP-LA-POULE, sire of ELAINE LA HUMOROUS, and about him much company of chapmen of the Shires. And "Oyez! good Sirs," cried he, "I give you rumour of war; not for fair lands, since none such be left to raid, but for gold, that yellow peril, the quest of great hearts. And herein victory shall be to the loudest voice; and that land shall go under, ours or another, that cannot bruit abroad her wares to the welkin. A murrain, say I, on false shame! Shall any reave us of our right to be esteemed a nation of bagmen? Never, pardie!"

3RD, 4TH.—Now to the lieges of his Suzerain Lady came challenge of tourney from OOM of the Doppers, Lord of Outrevalles. And ROUGE GARDE the trobador smote on his tambour and made a Chanson des Pauvres Diables Distractz. And the lists were straightly set in Val de Long-Tomps. And the hollow plain was ribbed with naked rocks, grey kopjes crowning all. And from the borders of Our Lady of the Snows, and from Isles of the Southern Cross, flew winged proffers of vassal service, and the cry of knighthood calling to saddle and spur. And it was really rather curious. For My Lord RED-TAPE, out of his great knowledge of warlike matters, made retort courteous, saying, "Oy deus! what should we with horse? Send us foot!"

5TH, 6TH.—But by force of whelming numbers and a stubborn hardihood begot of British beef, they overbore no few of the chivalry of Oom; and some they made captive before ever they could mount and invite the hills to cover them. Thereupon a remnant of England's knighthood, composite of the heavy sort and such as go in housings of blue (for a sprinkling of actual horsemen had joined issue with the foe in the *mêlée*), made their ways homeward. And Le Sieur BOBS DE KANDAHAR, holding that the tourney was accomplished, himself took ship whence he came. At this the heathen, emerging from their *parole* or other sanctuary, rallied for the onset; and they swept the lists like an Egypt's plague of locusts. And about the time of the seventeenth moon (shaped sickle-wise for sign of a bloody aftermath) the new Lord RED-TAPE (for the former had been lifted nigher the throne as one that had the French speech most nimble on his tongue) woke from a drugged sleep on a cry of danger, calling "To horse! A crown a day, and d—n the expense!" So, the traverse being a windy matter at this season, there was mounting in red haste against the second anniversary of the tourney.

7TH, 8TH.—Meanwhile to the tents of the puissant and most Christian DE WET came heralds for parley. Now you shall know that he was the match of three leopards for padded cunning

and agility. It was a dog-eat nature, keen nose and mobile paw. And the envoys of peace he bade take and flog, and the third he foully slew. But the tidings of this same feat of arms was brought to Lord OOM, lying *perdu* among the oversea Dutch. And him the messengers found helmed in the beaver's pelt, deep in Holy Writ, psalter at elbow. And on the hearing of their tale he lifted strained eyes from the page of DAVID and said: "By the rood, Sirs, 'twas well done!"

9TH.—Now at the very sable of fog-tide you must understand that they play Moralities on the dun banks of Thames. And of such are the moving histories of Sir Richard de Whittingtoun, La Belle Dormeuse, Damosel Rouge-Cape, The Forest Infants, Mistress Cendrillon (called Cinderella of the Fur Slipper, though certain lack-lores would have her shod not in *vair*, which is to say fur, but *verre*, namely glass), Jacques Mort-au-Géant and Aladdin of the Lamp Merveilleous (out of Araby). Follows a sample or so in this kind.

10TH TO 12TH.—Whether it was the red wine, or the splitting of crackers, or else her cinder-hot beauty, I know not, that set the Prince's heart on sudden fire. Certes, he caught her to his knee in the eyes of all the gaping meinie.

"Vair-slipper," he cried, "your little foot is on my neck; your slave am I already. Make me your Prince!"

"Lord, say not that," said Mistress CENDRILLON. Ashen were her cheeks against the blue flame of her hair. Twice round her brows it went, and the pigtail's ending slept between her breasts. "Lord," says she, "it can never be. The humming-bird may not mate with the titmouse."

"By my halidom," he cried, "but it shall be so, *ma mye*."

"Lord!" she murmured, "the hour is close on middle night; let me away!"

She slipped like green water from his rocky arms. "Nay, popinjay," he cried, "it is the hour of Philomel. Stay with me till she withdraw before the early throstle."

For all answer, light as a beam of Dian she slid down the banisters and so past the drowsy cloak-room sentinels. Midnight carillon, peeling from a hundred belfries, snapped the wand of *faërie*. Into the sheer starlight flitted the shadow of a homing wench, clad in most pitiful poor gear. My Lord Prince, hot in pursuit, stood rooted to earth, chanting a forlorn stave of "*Le Trésor des Humbles*." Against the nap of his sapphire vest he held a Slipper of Vair chance-dropped in the princely purlieus.

13TH TO 15TH.—Young Spring was waking in the high woods. Now was the pairing-time of amorous fowls in burgeoned brakes. Earth turned in her sleep with a throb of surging sap. Lush hyacinths spread a gossamer web to veil her bridal. Hand in hand, as became orphans of one ravaged house, the Forest Infants paced under boon boughs.

"Parbleu," said FULK, that was right heir of this goodly demesne, "but I have an aching maw!"

"And I," said his sister ALYS, "I also could do with a devilled ortolan."

"'Tis a dog of an uncle!" said FULK, with a round oath that your Gascon trooper might repeat, not I.

"And the aunt a vile ferret," replied ALYS, and wept for mere emptiness.

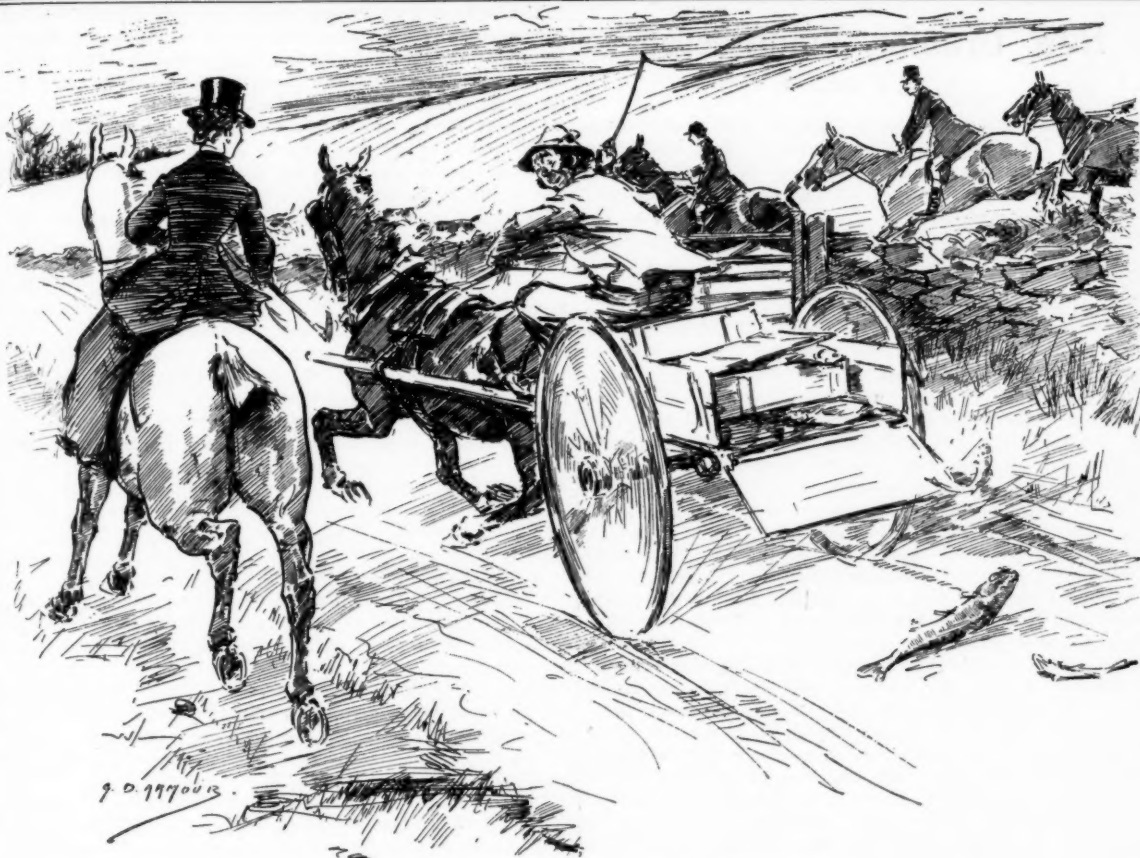
"*Mort de ma mère*," cried FULK, "'tis ill work ambling thus. Let us lie close in the quick undergrowth, and woo dreams of potted lobster, first having shriven our dusty souls."

And so they found them after a many days, stark, each in the other's gripe. And their pall was wrought of the dead leaves of yesteryear. The robins had done it. The red of their breasts was, I take it, the passionate heart's blood that showed through.

(To be continued.)

O. S.

NEW READING OF OLD PROVERB (with a beer-consumer's compliments to Mr. Henry Ch-pl-n).—"Ars est celare ars-enic."—Yours, QUARTO DE BEERS.



"A-HUNTING WE WILL GO!"

Lady. "YOU'RE DROPPING YOUR FISH!"
Irish Fish Hawker (riding hard). "OCH, BAD LUCK TO THIM! NIVER MOIND. SURE WE'RE KAPIN' UP WID THE GENTRY!"

SERVICE AND SOCIETY NEWS.

(According to Mr. Sheldon.)

["The Rev. CHARLES M. SHELDON has just aroused the wrath of the ladies of Topeka by his views on the servant-girl problem. He advocated from the pulpit 'the hired girl' should be treated as one of the family and cherished, not chided."
 —*Pall Mall Gazette.*]

LORD DOUBLESHERE entertained a small party of friends at his town house last evening. After dinner the servants mingled freely with the guests, and the Marchioness of STOKE NEWINGTON was presented to the second stair-maid, Miss ELIZABETH WILKINS, whose acquaintance she made.

Among the smart "bridge" parties last week must be numbered Mrs. ALGEY BOUNCEBY'S. Her butler, THOMAS SCRAGGS, who paired for the first rubber with the Duke of DUNKIRK, is fast proving his claim to be one of the finest exponents of this fashionable card game.

We understand that the Countess of CRUMBLETON has issued cards to a dis-

tinguished but select few to meet her coachman, Mr. JOHN JENKINS.

At the theatre the other evening, conspicuous among a remarkably well-dressed set of people, we noticed Lord LOUGHBORO, the Hon. Misses LOUGHBORO, and the head gardener, EZEKIEL JILKS. The latter gentleman wore the famous silver Albert watch-chain, a Christmas present, it is understood, from Miss GWENDOLEN LOUGHBORO, the bestowal of which gift has aroused so much comment in aristocratic and horticultural circles.

Half-a-dozen dissatisfied members of Brooks's club are talking of resigning if Lord LIVEWELL'S groom is not black-balled. He was of course put up by Lord LIVEWELL himself and seconded by his uncle, Earl GOTHPEACE. One or two rumours have certainly reached us reflecting on the temperance of BOB WHIPPET, the handsome groom. But for the old-fashioned prejudices which evidently animate the action of the discontented six, we have nothing but the severest reproof.

Owing to the severe illness of Miss MADELINE MARROWBY, the stall at the forthcoming Bazaar will be taken by her maid ELLEN CRIPPS. As previously arranged, the stall-holders will be presented individually to the Royal Visitors.

In the forthcoming golf competition, at Hoylake, Miss SUSAN BATES, the scullery-maid to Hon. Miss FITZWINTER, is looked on as a likely prize winner. Her handicap playing has shown a wonderful improvement lately, so much so that her considerate mistress has given her permission to forego her ordinary duties of washing up the dishes and filling the coal scuttles, in order that she may get in a good morning's practise on the links.

Among the presentations for the next Drawing-room we are glad to notice the name of KATE BRIGGS, the pretty second parlour-maid of Lord and Lady WIGMORE. It will be remembered that their head butler attended the last levée. A full description of Miss BRIGGS'S presentation costume appears elsewhere.

How Granfer Volunteered.

By M. E. FRANCIS.

FARMER SAMPSON rolled slowly homewards after church one wintry Sunday, full of a comfortable sense of righteousness, and looking forward to a reposeful hour before the mid-day meal. He exchanged greetings with his neighbours, discussed with them the probability of "snow-stuff" coming, or the likelihood of "its taking up" that night. Being an affable man, his opinion invariably coincided with that of the last person who spoke to him.

Arrived at his own substantial dwelling, and pausing a moment, on passing through the kitchen, to inhale the fragrance of the roasting joint, he proceeded first to the best parlour, an awe-inspiring room, never used save for a christening or a funeral; a shrine for stuffed birds, wax fruits and flowers, unopened books and the family's best wearing apparel. Mrs. SAMPSON's Sunday bonnet reposed in the handbox beneath the sofa; the accompanying gown was stowed away on one of the shelves of the bureau; other garments, belonging respectively to children and grand-children, were hidden beneath silver paper in other receptacles; and the master of the house, now divesting himself of his broadcloth coat, hung it carefully on the back of a chair, and restored his hat to the peg allotted to it behind the door. Then, making his way to the family living-room, he assumed his white "pinner"—a clean one, which had been laid ready for him on the table—took up the newspaper, sat down in the wide armchair by the hearth, which his substantial figure filled to a nicety, drew his spectacles from his pocket, and began to read. But, as he slowly spelt out line after line, his forefinger moving along the column on which his eyes rested, the air of contentment with which he at first settled to his task gave way, first to an expression of puzzled astonishment, then to one of irresolution, and, finally, to absolute consternation. After, however, reading and re-reading the paragraph which had attracted his attention in the *Western Weekly*, scratching his head, rubbing his nose, drumming with his fingers on the table; and, in fact, availing himself to the full of every recognised aid to thought, his brow cleared, and bringing one mighty clenched hand down on the open palm of the other, he exclaimed aloud:

"I'll do it! I'm blest if I don't do it; my dooty do stare me in the face."

Thereupon, wheeling round slowly in his chair so as to face the door—a matter of some little difficulty—he proceeded to call, or rather to bellow, at the top of his voice. "Missus! Grandma! Come here, will 'ee? POLLY, ANNIE—be there anyone about? Here, little 'uns, go an' fetch Grandma, one on you. Mis-sus!"

Presently there was a rush of feet, and Mrs. SAMPSON entered, followed by her married daughter POLLY, with three or four children clinging to her skirts, while Maidy ANNIE, the father's favourite, hastened in from the rear.

"Bless me, Granfer! Whatever be the matter?" inquired his wife anxiously.

Good old SAMPSON had been known as "Father," in the family circle for many a year, until POLLY and her husband had taken up their abode at the farm, when the title of "Granfer," naturally used by the children, had come to be universally adopted.

"There be matter enough for one while," he now responded gloomily, and yet with a certain air of dignified triumph.

"Dear heart alive, they Boers b'ain't a-coming to fight us over here, be they?" cried ANNIE, who was an imaginative young person.

"There's no knowin' what they'll be a-thinkin' on if we don't look out," responded her father, importantly. "It b'ain't so much the Boers," he continued, with a superior air,

"'tis the French as we must be on our guard again'—an' the Germans—an' the *Rooshans*," he cried, emphatically, his eyes growing wider and wider as he named each nationality. "They do say as they do all hate us worse nor p'ison, and is only lookin' for an opportunity for attackin' us."

"Dear! dear! ye don't say so!" groaned Mrs. SAMPSON. "'Tis worse nor in BONEY's time. Lard! I can mind my father tellin' me 'a when he was a boy they was expectin' for sure as BONEY 'nd, and the country very near went mad wi' fright. A now ye say there be more nor the French again us?"

"Whatever is to be done?" put in POLLY. "I can't think as there can be many soldiers a-left i' the country wi' them great ships-full goin' out week arter week. Who's to defend us if any o' them folks from abroad do come?"

Granfer looked slowly round from one anxious face to the other, rolled his head from side to side, heaved a deep sigh, and finally remarked in a sepulchral tone:

"There's summat a-goin' to be done, ye might be sure." He paused, nodded, smoothed out the paper on his knee, and finally handed it with a tragic air to ANNIE.

"See here, my maid," he said, indicating a certain paragraph with his broad thumb; "read this here to your mother an' all on us. Then ye'll see what's a-goin' to be done!"

He threw himself back in his chair, while ANNIE, somewhat mystified and a good deal alarmed, read the following:

"Her Majesty the QUEEN has been graciously pleased to invite her old soldiers to return to service again for one year, for the defence of the country during the absence of her armies in South Africa."

"The text of the proclamation posted at the War Office will be found in another column. Such an appeal will be warmly responded to by many a loyal British heart; our veterans will rejoice at the opportunity thus afforded them of proving their devotion to Queen and Country."

"Well," said Mrs. SAMPSON, in a relieved tone. "Think o' that now! I'm sure there be a good few old soldiers about, an' it'll be very nice for 'em to have a chance of doin' summat."

"Very nice!" shouted her lord, with unaccountable fierceness. "Very nice, do ye say? That be your notion, be it? Well, I did look for a bid more feelin' from you. A man may be willin' to do his dooty, an' yet he mid find it oncomen hard work!"

"Why, Granfer, what be talkin' about? I'm sure I never—"

"Do you suppose, Missus, as us old folks won't find it a bit agin' us to go shootin' an' manoverin' an sich like at our time o' life? Wi' the best heart in the world, I reckon we be like to find it a bit stiff."

"Bless me, SAMPSON, don't tell I as you've a-got a notion o' j'inin' the army at your time o' life. Lard save us!" she continued, with gathering irritation, "I do believe you've a-took leave of your senses!"

"My dear woman," returned the farmer, "I do 'low it will have gived ye a bit of a turn; but there 'tis, wrote plain for all to read: 'Her Majesty the QUEEN have invited her old soldiers to serve'—if Her Majesty have a-made up her mind as 'tis old soldiers she wants, it b'ain't for the likes of us to go again' it. I've aays heard tell as the QUEEN were an uncommon sensible woman, an' she've a-found out most like as these here youngsters b'ain't to be trusted—ye can't expect old heads on young shoulders. I never did hold wi' them there notions o' shart service, an' havin' nothin' but lads i' th' army; an' Her Majesty—d' ye see, Her Majesty—do very like agree wi' I."

"Well but, Granfer," said POLLY, doubtfully, "d' ye think the QUEEN did mean soldiers as had—as had left off practising so long as you?"

"An', besides," put in ANNIE, quickly, "'tisn't same as if you was ever a regular soldier in barracks an' that. Ye did only go out wi' the Yeomanry, didn't ye?"

"Well," returned her father, indignantly, "an' will 'ee go



"ROUSSEAU'S DREAM."

Neptune. "LOOK OUT, MY DEAR, YOU'RE MISTRESS ON THE SEA; BUT THERE'S A NEIGHBOUR OF YOURS THAT'S TRYING TO BE MISTRESS UNDER IT."

Britannia. "ALL RIGHT, FATHER NEP.—I'M NOT ASLEEP."

[*"M. ROUSSEAU, the inventor of the submarine warship, says, that the advantage of the submersible system would be incontestable, but that certain problems have arisen of which the solution has not been altogether realised" . . . "The belief of M. ROUSSEAU, however, is that the type of the submersible is perfectible, and that the difficulties will be overcome."*—*"Moniteur de la Flotte,"* quoted in *"Times,"* January 16.]

for to tell I as a man as was twenty year a trooper in the Darset Yeomanry b'ain't a soldier! Why what else be he then? Ye be a voolish maid, my dear, very voolish!"

"But," gasped poor Mrs. SAMPSON, recovering breath at last, "'tis thirty year an' more, I'm sure, since ye did go out wi' 'em! Ah! I'm sure 'tis thirty year—'twas when poor HARRY was a baby as ye did give up, an' long afore POLLY was born."

"Now, I tell 'ee what, Missus, this here kind o' talk isn't the proper talk for them as loves Queen and Country. What do the papers say? Read yourself, an' see. If every old soldier in the country was to go makin' excuses, an' thinkin' this, that an' t'other, who's to defend England? Now I'm a old man, an' a bit stiff i' the j'int, an' a bit heavy on my legs, but I can get on a harse, and pull a trigger yet. And I'm not the man to go and disapp'int the QUEEN. There! My mind be made up, an' ye may tark till midnight wi'out changin' it."

"Well, to be sure," said poor Granfma, dropping into a chair, "I must say I didn't think as I should live to see this day. When a body comes to your time o' life I didn't look for ye to be tarkin' o' goin' off to the war, jist at our busiest time o' year too, when we may be lookin' out for new calves any day, and the lambin' season not half over."

"'Tis a bit ark'ard, that I must agree," returned SAMPSON, his face falling as he spoke. "Ah, I could ha' wished as Her Majesty hadn't a-called upon us in the midst o' lambin' time. We must do the best we can, that's all. TOM must see to things. I'd 'low other folks find it jist so hard to leave their businesses. But when you comes to talkin' o' my years, Missus, you do make a mistake. 'Tis my years as makes my services valuable. Now, ANNIE, read what 's wrote here about the men comin' up."

ANNIE dolorously found the place, and read how already the response throughout the country had been unanimous, and how men were turning up by hundreds at various military depôts to offer their services.

"Ah!" commented Granfer reflectively, "the nearest military deepotts. Let me see; ours 'ud be Blanchester, I suppose. Well, Missus, make up your mind to it; I'll be off to-morrow. When a thing must be done, it must be done."

Mrs. SAMPSON threw her apron over her head, and began to weep. POLLY sniffed ominously, the children wailed, and ANNIE, flinging her arms round her father's neck, besought him to think better of it.

"There, to be sure! What a fuss ye do make," cried he, struggling in her embrace. "What be all in such a stew about, eh? I b'ain't a-goin' off to fight the Boers, I tell 'ee. I be a-goin' for to bide here and defend the country if the French or the Roosians comes this way. As like as not, I shall be able to come back'ards and for'ards pretty often to see how ye be all a-gettin' on. There, I tell 'ee ye should take more thought for I, and not go a-upsettin' of I this way. 'Tis 'ard enough for I as 'tis!" And here the large face which was looking disconsolately over ANNIE'S shoulder assumed a purple hue, and big tears gathered in Granfer's usually merry eyes.

"There," he added weakly, as, freeing one hand from his daughter's somewhat strangulating caresses, he produced a large red-and-yellow handkerchief, and proceeded to mop his eyes, "you did ought to help I instead of hinderin' of I! You do all owe a dooty to Queen and Country yourselves."

After this appeal to the better feelings of the family, all opposition was withdrawn, and presently they fell to discussing arrangements for the carrying out of his Spartan intent.

"My uniform is laid by safe enough, I know," said Granfer, "but 'tis a question whether 'twill fit me or no. I've got a bit stoutish since I left off wearin' of 'em."

"Lard man! the jacket 'll not come within a yard o' meetin'—ye be twice so big round as ye did used to be; an' as for the trousers—there, there 's no use thinkin' of 'em! They'd no more fit 'ee nor they would little JACKIE there."

"Them trousers as ye've a-got on 'ud do very well, though," said POLLY. "They 're dark, d'ye see."

"I'll have to ride, though," said her father thoughtfully. "E'es—bein' in the Yeomanry, d'ye see, I'm bound to ride. 'Twouldn't look no-ways respectful like if I didn't offer myself, harse an' all."

"Well, I'm sure I don't know what harse ye'll take, wi'out it's Chrissy," returned Mrs. SAMPSON. "Ye'll never get a saddle to stay on Vi'let or Duke; besides, they're wanted for ploughin'. An' Bob 'ud never carry ye."

"Well, Chrissy 'ud do right enough. He was a fine mare in his day. I never see a better. There isn't a colt as I've a-had from 'en as haven't turned out well. E'es TOM mid drive 'en up from the lower mead to-morrow morn, an' we'll rub 'en down a bit and make 'em smart."

"But ye'll never go for to ride all the way, Granfer?" pleaded the anxious wife. "Ye'll be joggled to pieces, an' I'm sure your best trousers won't be fit to be seen. There's reason in all things. Ye'd best go in JOYCE'S cart, and tie Chrissy at back till ye get near the town."

"Ah! I mid do that," he agreed, with unexpected docility. "I reckon I'd find it a stiffish job to ride so far without I had a bit more practice."

The discussion was here interrupted by the entrance of TOM, POLLY'S husband, but was resumed with even greater energy after the state of affairs had been explained to him. As he was short-sighted enough to express doubt and disapproval, the entire family fell upon him with one accord and reduced him to a state of sulky submission.

(To be continued.)



AVIS AUX VOYAGEURS.

THRICE blessed the day when a message to Mars

Can go for a penny the syllable hence;

And postage to all of the various stars

Is reduced to a decimal fraction of pence?

When a trip to a planet, a moon, or a sun

Is regarded as only the usual thing,

And weekly excursions to Jupiter run

Through every month of the summer and spring.

When a shoot, to be had in the Leonids, yields

A heavyish bag of aerial grouse,

When Pallas and Saturn are recognised fields

For finding the veriest duck of a house.

When we dine in the Pleiades—coffee discussed

Go on to a dance in Titania (*mem*:

That catch without fail we assuredly must

A train to the earth at 2:30 A.M.)

Thrice blessed the day—but, oh! let us endure,

Nor play with such possibly dangerous tools,

Lest we finish by making excessively sure

That we are a unique generation of fools!

SHOCKING CASE OF DOMESTIC DESTITUTION.—In an advertisement for "A Cook, General," the allurements are held out, "Comfortable home. Four in family. No windows or boots." Views of comfort vary. But the picture here presented, of a family of four going about on bootless errands in a windowless house, hardly meets the usual standard. Possibly the conditions are recognised as suitable to the peculiarities of the semi-military person addressed.

'VARSITY VERSES.

OXFORD ODES.

III.

NOT for a term, O cloistered High,
 Along thy classic stones shall I,
 All gownless through the midnight fly,
 Nor put an extra spurt on
 As, drawing nearer and more near,
 The bulldogs at my heels I hear—
 No longer shall I disappear
 Among thy shades, O Merton!

The pious founder, who'd the face
 To leave this poor unportioned place
 To charity's haphazard grace,
 Is praised and adulated;
 Whilst I, whose benefactions fat,
 Have kept alive his starveling brat,
 Am only recompensed for that
 By being rusticated.

For we fell out, the dons and I—
 Where is the greedy scout can vie
 For unabashed rapacity
 With college dons and tutors?—
 My fines for being ploughed in Mods
 Have renovated both the quads
 And made them temples where the gods
 Might quaff their foaming pewters.

Farewell, O academic town!
 Thy undergrad is going down.
 A brief farewell to cap and gown,
 Farewell to Greek and Latin!
 And you, ye ancient halls, adieu!
 We must be strangers, I and you.
 Farewell, my stall in chapel, too,
 Which I so seldom sat in!

A THOUSANDTH PITY.

(Interview with a man up-to-date, but
 long past his time.)

"How is your Majesty getting on?"
 asked the Bouverie Street man.

"Oh, as well as I have been doing for
 the last thousand years."

"Can you tell me whether the story
 about allowing the cakes to spoil is
 true?"

"I don't remember it," replied the
 shadowy monarch, with a grave smile.
 "But it is a pity to spoil a belief that has
 furnished a subject for any number of
 pictures."

"And is it true that you were born on
 the birth-day and death-day of SHAK-
 SPEARE?"

"Well, that is also a disputed point, as
 some people insist that the Bard of Avon
 is as much a myth as—as, well, as myself."

"But didn't you win a great battle on
 St. George's Day?"

"So I have been told, but I have no
 distinct recollection of the transaction."

"But, good gracious!" exclaimed the
 Bouverie Street man, "if you are so
 vague about your deeds, why are we
 making such a fuss about you?"

"I don't know. Except it appears to



"DID OUR HAT-RACK WALK ABOUT AND HAVE ONLY TWO PEGS, ONCE, AUNTIE?"

please the people at Winchester, which,
 by the way, was a very different place to
 what it is now, when I knew it, or if I
 ever did know it."

"But surely you invented the candle-
 clock?"

"If I did I never patented it."

"Well, don't you want to be fêted?
 Come, your Majesty, you surely have a
 little pride!"

"My good friend, I am very much of the
 same opinion as EARL ROBERTS. We may
 as well leave glorification until the War
 is over. The subscriptions to fête me
 have been fewer than were anticipated.
 Why not pay for my statue, as it is ordered,
 and give the balance to the Princess of
 WALES' Fund?"

And thus ALFRED again made good his
 title of "Great."

A SONG CELESTIAL.

(Martian Version.)

WINK at me only with thine eye
 And that shall be the sign,
 Then spurn thy Teslas into space
 And I'll the like with mine.
 The science of thy latter days
 Is doubtless very fine,
 But I have lunatics enough,
 I will not talk with thine.

I glowed of late with tender heat,
 Not thinking aught of thee,
 But in the hope dear Venus' self
 That light of love might see.
 But since the worms that round thee
 crawl
 Have glimmered back at me,
 I hope and yearn for naught, I swear,
 Save my next apogee.

CONVERSATIONAL HINTS FOR YOUNG RIDERS.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM letters lately received, I am pleased to note that these hints are meeting with some little attention in the world of young riders, but there seems, unfortunately, to be a slight misconception as to their scope and intention on the part of some of my correspondents. Here, for instance, is one—he veils a good sound sporting name behind the modest pseudonym, "An Inquirer"—who asks me: (1), to recommend a boot-maker and a breeches-maker; (2), to inform him what, in my opinion, is the best drink to take out in his flask; (3), to advise him as to the proper treatment of sore backs, splints, and corns; and (4), to say what I consider the best type of horse for a certain kind of country which he describes. These matters, my dear Sir, are not for me. This treatise has nothing to do—except quite incidentally, of course—with the points you name. I am ready to tell you how to talk and generally how to bear yourself in the hunting field, but there I stop. I flutter about the outside of things in a light and frivolous manner; I do not seek to penetrate into the temple or to tamper with the sacred mysteries revealed by Captain HAYES or Mrs. NANNY POWER O'DONOGHUE. Let others tell you how to judge a horse, how to ride, how to dress, and what shops you should honour with your custom. My ambition does not extend to these matters, and all I can do for you is to school your tongue.

Another letter concerns me more nearly: "Sir," says the writer, "in your interesting hints you have not, so far, touched a subject which you will, I think, admit to be one of the very highest importance to men who hunt. It is this: How, and under what circumstances, ought one to speak to a Master of Hounds? I've seen a great many fellows do it in different ways but none of them seemed to me to be quite satisfactory, for in our hunt there happens to be a sort of feeling that a man has got to be kept in his proper place, and if he pushes too much he gets himself snubbed—which is fun for the cat and ought to be death for the mouse, if the mouse would only agree to look at it in that way. Anyhow, please give me a tip or two, and oblige yours, as ever, The Stall at the Top."

This is a sensible letter and shows a prudent spirit. To answer it fully, however, would need considerable volume, which should investigate the origin and history of hunts and their masters from the earliest ages down to the present. It should begin, let us suppose, by describing how the ancient Briton, having discovered that his flocks were menaced, told his wife not to worry, embraced his clamouring brood and assured them that the fur-coated fox should be disposed of in a twinkling. Next he would send a polite message to BOADICEA to inform her, owing to urgent private affairs he would be unable to give himself the pleasure of taking part in a projected foray upon a friendly and unsuspecting tribe of neighbours, or of helping to decimate a Roman legion. Then I can see him overlaying with a fresh coat of scarlet paint his customary household garment of woad, selecting his sharpest javelins and his deadliest bow and sallying forth to extirpate the hostile wolf. This man, in course of time, would acquire the spirit of the chase. He would cease to look upon hunting as being merely intended to safeguard his flocks or his children. He would refuse to allow the marauding wolf to be slain except upon certain days duly appointed for the carrying out of the ceremony, and under certain formal conditions agreed upon by himself and his followers. These conditions he would then call Sport—the ancient British word escapes me at the moment—and he would attribute to it that sacred character of tribal importance which it has ever since maintained. His neighbours, recognising in him a chief of sportsmen, would invest him with the ceremonial leadership, granting to him amongst other privileges an annual tribute of corn and cattle to recompense him for the time and trouble spent in their service. He would feed his hounds, his

servants and himself at their expense so long as he was engaged in ministering to their pleasures, and would eventually be followed to his grave on Salisbury Plain by the sorrow and respect of the whole country-side. Here you have, sketched in brief, the first part of a historical work which has yet to be written. Some day a Professor FREEMAN will arise amongst hunting men and write it, but in the meantime we are reduced to paltry actualities, and must refrain from want of knowledge from more extended historical investigations.

I come back, then, to the question of addressing masters of hounds. The master is, if I may so describe him, the President of the most democratic republic in the world. He is elected to his great position by the suffrages of his equals, who have not the remotest intention of making him a ruler without power or privilege. They intend him to be, during his term of office, a strong autocrat, governing without fear or favour the sport which they consider to be the most important part of human life and activity. Amongst the innumerable things which, as we boast, have made Englishmen what they are; hunting assuredly stands pre-eminent—and not without reason. Courage and skill, grace, strength, activity and endurance, a gallant spirit, a knowledge of the country, a courteous consideration for others, together with a resolute determination to excel by all honourable means, a design to taste the exhilaration of perfect health in the open air and in swift movement, a complete control of and sympathy with your horse. These are some of the qualities that the sport of hunting requires and encourages in its votaries. Obviously, then, the man who is appointed to be the chief and the master of such a sport is, in virtue of his appointment, if in virtue of nothing else, entitled to a high respect and consideration.

(To be continued.)

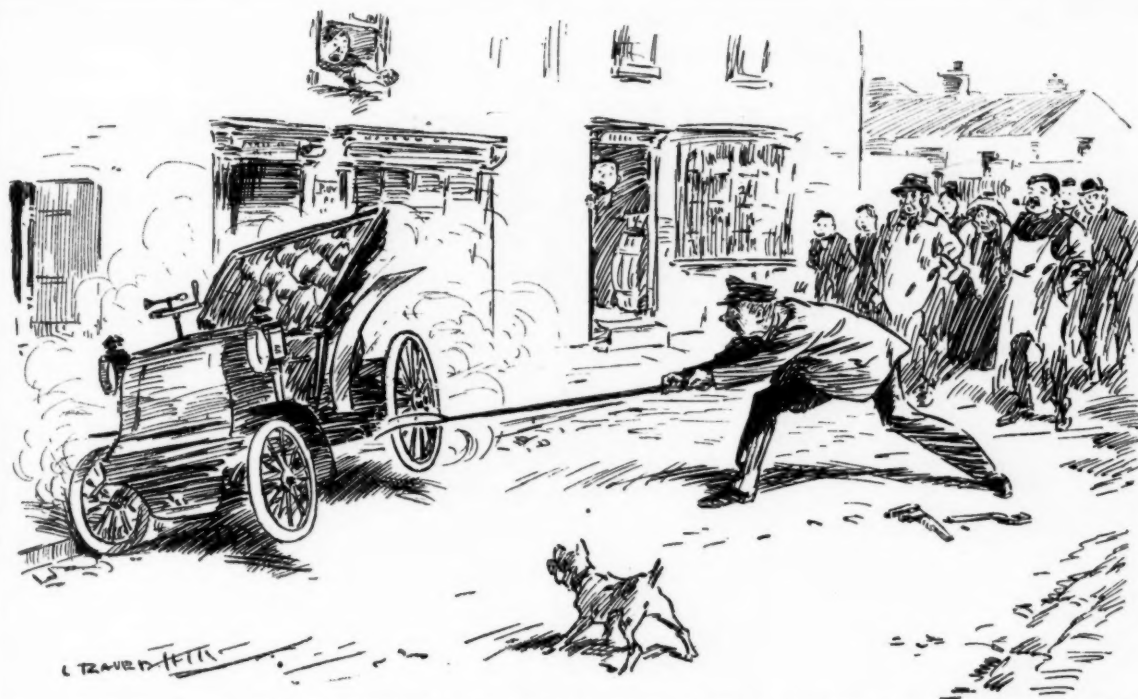


DRURIOLENO AND CO.

SINCE 1897, when Messrs. DAN LENO and HERBERT CAMPBELL disported themselves as *The Babes in the Wood*, Manager ARTHUR COLLINS has not given so excellent a pantomime as this present one, written by himself and Mr. HICKORY WOOD, viz., *The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast*. More gorgeous displays there may, perhaps, have been, but nothing, since aforesaid *Babes* to beat this in opportunities afforded to those masters in drollery, DAN and HERBERT (why shouldn't it be "BERTIE," if DANIEL be familiarised as "DAN" ?), for the display of their apparently utterly irresponsible and quite irresistible fun, which sends a crowded house into convulsions of uncontrollable laughter. As for the children among the audience, they shout and shriek with delight, leading the tumultuous applause.

DAN and BERTIE in a motor car, on a ladder "burgling," playing golf, are immense. Then DAN alone, as *Queen Rovia* in prison, telling the audience the story of her Aunt, moves his hearers to such tears of laughter that, though utterly exhausted, they would hear the whole narrative over again, including the criticism on "the Minstrel Boy," signifying the same to DAN by a perfect volley of applause at the conclusion of his soliloquy.

If the pantomime consisted of these scenes alone it would be first-rate value for money, but it has such scenery, such artistic and brilliant costumes, such poetic groupings, graceful dances and such catchingly tuneful and cleverly arranged music by



Owner of violently palpitating Motor Car. "THERE'S NO NEED TO BE ALARMED. IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT AS SOON AS I'VE DISCOVERED THE WHAT-D-YE-CALL-IT!"

that experienced light and leading composer, selector, arranger, and orchestra-conductor, J. M. GLOVER, that we can only wonder at the dazzling combinations and permutations, and, like the Admiral in *Billy Taylor*, "werry much applaud" what all the united efforts of various talented persons have contributed towards the now assured success of this Drury Lane Pantomime.

Mr. FRED EMNEY as *The Nurse* is the third "droll" who, already a favourite, keeps his hold on the audience throughout. Certain allusions, in the scenes wherein clever Mr. CAIRD appears as President of a Republic, might be advantageously omitted, as indeed might be all the topical "hits," which are rarely of such a kind as not offend some who are present, without causing much pleasure to others.

The *Princess Beauty*, Miss MADGE LESSING, obtains a treble encore when, attired as a boy, she sings a quaint "coon song" with chorus. Miss ELAINE RAVENSBURG is a charming *Prince Caramel* and Miss MOLLY LOWELL must be in everybody's opinion a perfect exemplar of what any Lord Jocelyn, ought to be. Once again the spring-heeled, airy, fairy Lilian-lady, Madame GRIGOLATI, "wires in" most successfully as *The Spirit of the Air* (Mr. GLOVER giving us the spirit of all the airs in the orchestra), and "comes off," and on, "with flying colours."

But, after all said, sung and done, we return to our DAN and BERTIE; for "men may come and men may go," but with these two leaders of the Drurylanian forces (though BERTIE wouldn't be quite at home without DAN, and they mustn't be separated) this pantomime, like the stream, could "run on for ever" if it were not for the "statutory limitations" in between.

As to "the houses in between" this and Easter, Manager COLLINS can regard them without the least anxiety. Mr. ARTHUR COLLINS gives a lot, too much perhaps, for the money, as the pantomime is too long, and "There's no denying of it, BETSY!"

LOVE'S LABOUR NOT LOST.

(Fragment from a Mercantile Romance.)

THE young Englishman sank down on the sofa in the conservatory, listening to the dance music in the distance, and, fixing his melancholy gaze upon the merry eyes of his partner, addressed her.

"I am glad to get away from the ball-room," he murmured. "You are quite sure you understand me?"

"Oh, yes; I speak perfectly the English," was the smiling response.

"*Parce que je parle parfaitement le Français*," he continued; "but, of course, I am more at home in my own tongue."

"And what do you want know?" queried the fair girl, playing with her fan.

"You are fond of dress?"

"Fond! I dote upon it! Oh, I love it!"

"Then you have extravagant tastes—*vous avez un goût qui coûte chère*?"

"Oh, no; not at all. I know where to get my gowns in the market of the cheapest. I go to places—shops—where I buy for nothing, scarcely anything at all."

"Can you give me the address?" he asked, taking out his note-book.

"You are too kind, you are too good. But the trousseau is provided by the bride's family," and she cast down her eyes in some confusion.

"The addresses," he pleaded. Then the pencil went gliding over the paper, and the note-book was replaced in the young man's pocket. "I must go now. Adieu."

They parted. Then the fair young Frenchwoman sighed. He had not proposed! What a strange sort of Englishman!

But she was wrong. He was not a strange sort of Englishman, but only a British commercial traveller on the model suggested by Lord ROSEBURY.



A PLEASURE TO COME.

PROVINCIAL MAYORS. "WE TRUST YOUR LORDSHIP WILL NAME AN EARLY DAY FOR ACCEPTING THE FREEDOM OF OUR ANCIENT BOROUGH."
 LORD ROBERTS. "THANKS, GENTLEMEN; BUT I AM WAITING FOR THE FREEDOM OF SOUTH AFRICA."

["May I, therefore, ask you to do me the great favour of postponing to a later date and happier time the welcome you have been kind enough to offer me, and which will then be so highly appreciated?"
Letter of Lord Roberts to the Lord Mayors, "Times," January 18.]



LOVE'S LITTLE LIABILITIES.

Short Stories with very Sad Endings.

I.—THE MYSTERY OF MAURICE PINION.

WITH a beautiful unconventionality that so strongly appealed to the sensitive nature of MAURICE PINION he had been permitted to drift, as it were, into the affections of SYBIL HOYLAK. There was no more tacit engagement ever formed. Each had borrowed a phrase from scholastic Euclid, and said, "Let it be granted." But the moment had come to establish the reciprocity of love on what is termed in commercial circles a sound and definite basis. Mr. PINION had suddenly appeared on the horizon of SYBIL's life and walked straight into her young heart, with the solemn inevitableness of a wind-borne cloud. Who he was, what he was, were alike matters of conjecture.

They reclined rather than sat in the two corners of a Chesterfield sofa. Each cherished an inward conviction that the course of true love was going to be dammed by unkind circumstance.

The man leant a little forward as he spoke. "SYBIL," he said, rather hesitatingly at first, but gathering force as he went on, "for nearly six months we have lived under the spell of love's young dream. The awakening must come. I need not repeat what I have said a thousand times in a thousand different ways—I love you."

The girl shivered nervously.

"Before I ask you the great momentous question, you must learn who I am—what I am." The man faltered.

"I can trust you," said the girl softly.

"It helps me to go on," said MAURICE PINION, "as the knowledge of your priceless love and sympathy has led me to hope that when I have revealed to you the secret of my life—you will not turn against me as so many have done."

SYBIL raised her eyes tenderly towards his.

"You—you are n-not a convict, a—"

"Not exactly," said PINION. "But—"

"Ah! You have perpetrated some monstrous crime!"

"No, no. I'm guiltless of any crime within the meaning of the act."

"Thank Heaven, thank Heaven!" she gasped, her breath coming in the prescribed thick condition under the terrible stress. "Do not tell me you are a Company Promoter!"

"No," he answered sadly, "no such luck."

"Or a long-firm swindler."

"Indeed, no."

"Or a faith curate—I mean curist."

"Faith!" MAURICE PINION uttered the word significantly, and paused in an attitude of defiance.

The girl groaned, and hid her face in the blue-veined fingers with which nature had blessed her—for that purpose.

"Listen," cried PINION, rising and pacing the room rapidly. "It all began by my sending a little thing to one of the magazines. I meant nothing by it; indeed, I meant nothing."

"Horrible, horrible!" moaned SYBIL.

"It was accepted."

"Naturally. These advertisements—"

"You don't understand. It was not an advertisement."

"Not an advertisement!"

"I sent another. The same result. Accepted." The man laughed ironically. "I only thought then of the encouragement with courtesy, and a cheque—"

"I sent another. The same result."

"Accepted." The man laughed ironically.

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SALISBURY PLAIN CONNING TOWER.

A SUGGESTION FOR THE RE-ARRANGEMENT OF STONEHENG WHEN THE PROPOSED RESTORATION TAKES PLACE.

"Oh, I can't bear it!"

"They led me on. I sent more, and they took it. Little did I think of the trap these callous men were setting for me. Insensibly I was drifting—drifting towards my doom. Soon I saw there was no escape. I was caught—marked and branded with the sign of my awful calling. And all the time they fed me with praise and flattery, and dulled my senses to impending fate. In due course"—here the man stopped before the weeping girl, and faltered in the extremity of shame—"I published a little volume."

The girl gave vent to a long-drawn wail of agony.

"Then, like a Swiss avalanche on a

COOK's tourist, all the world bore down upon me and sought to crush me with their epithets of miserable contumely. I staggered beneath the blow, but it was too late—too late. I was recognised."

"Recognised?" echoed SYBIL, as if in a dream.

"Yes. The truth can no longer be hid. I am a minor poet!"

The woman rose to her full height as PINION half drew from his pocket a slim "pot" volume.

"No, no," she said, a look of terror overspreading her delicate face. Then in tones of anguish she cried, "I am very sorry for you. I pity you—indeed—" She stretched forth a dainty hand. MAURICE PINION touched it lightly. The book dropped back into his pocket. The door closed softly behind him.

THE END.

KNOWLEDGE ON CREDIT.

(See any paper.)

WALK up! walk up! ye devotees

Of 'cyclopædic lore!

Pay your deposits, if you please!

There's only one day more!

Oh, haste and fly

To grace your homes

With learning's choicest stock O!

And buy, buy, buy

These tasty tomes

In cloth or half-morocco!

If you've an affinity,

Say, for divinity,

Here you will find what you need;

Or if for conchology,

Palæontology,

Meteorology,

Any old 'ology,

You've only to open and read.

And all on credit! Buy, buy, buy!

Your duty it is plain,

For such an opportunity

May not occur again.

Time was men went

To learned don,

Time was they went to college,

And even spent

Long years upon

A single branch of knowledge.

But now you know what to do!

All you have got to do

Is your deposit to pay,

And half-an-hour's reading

Is all you'll be needing,

Believe me, 'twill take you

No longer to make you

On any great subject *au fait*:

Although before you never knew

Its very A B C,

An OWEN, HUXLEY, HERSCHELL you

In half-an-hour will be.

Walk up! walk up! ye devotees

Of 'cyclopædic lore!

Pay your deposits, if you please;

There's only one day more!

DRAMATIC SEQUELS.

IV.—MORE ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

SCENE.—The garden of BENEDICK's house at Padua. BENEDICK is sitting on a garden seat, sunning himself indolently. BEATRICE is beside him, keeping up her reputation for conversational brilliancy by a series of sprightly witticisms.

Beatrice. Very likely I do talk twice as much as I should. But then, if I talk too much you certainly listen far too little, so we are quits. Do you hear?

Benedick (opening his eyes slowly). Eh?

Beatrice. I believe you were asleep! But there—'tis a great compliment to my wit. Like ORPHEUS, I can put even the savage beasts to sleep with it. (Benedick's eyes close again, and he appears to sink into a profound doze.) But if the beasts go to sleep there's no use in being witty. I suppose ORPHEUS never thought of that. Come, wake up, good Signior Beast. (Prods him coquettishly with her finger.) Have you forgotten that the Duke is coming?

Benedick (drowsily). When will he be here?

Beatrice. Ere you have done gaping.

Benedick (terribly bored by this badinage). My dear, if only you would occasionally answer a plain question. When do you expect him?

Beatrice (skittish to the last). Plain questions should only be answered by plain people.

Benedick (yawning heartily). A pretty question then.

Beatrice. Pretty questions should only be asked by pretty people. There! What do you think of that for wit!

Benedick. Really, my dear, I can hardly trust myself to characterise it in—er—fitting terms. (Rings bell. Enter Page.) When is the Duke expected?

Page. In half-an-hour, Sir.

Benedick. Thank you. [Exit Page.]

Beatrice (pouting). You needn't have rung. I could have told you that.

Benedick. I am sure you could, my dear. But as you wouldn't—

Beatrice. I was going to, if you had given me time.

Benedick. Experience has taught me, my dear BEATRICE, that it is usually much quicker to ring! (Closes his eyes again.)

Beatrice. How rude you are!

Benedick (half opening them). Eh?

Beatrice. I said it was very rude of you to go to sleep when I am talking.

Benedick (closing his eyes afresh). It's perfectly absurd of you to talk when I am going to sleep.

Beatrice (girding herself for fresh witticisms). Why absurd?

Benedick. Because I don't hear what you say, of course, my love.

Beatrice (whose repartees have been scattered

tered for the moment by this adroit compliment). Well, well, sleep your fill, Bear. I'll go and bandy epigrams with Ursula.

[Exit BEATRICE. BENEDICK looks cautiously round to see if she is really gone, and then heaves a sigh of relief.]

Benedick. Poor BEATRICE! If only she were not so incorrigibly sprightly. She positively drives one to subterfuge.

[Produces a book from his pocket, which he reads with every appearance of being entirely awake.]

Enter DON PEDRO, as from a journey.

BENEDICK does not see him.

Don Pedro. Signior BENEDICK!

Benedick (starting up on hearing his name). Ah, my dear Lord. Welcome to Padua.

Don Pedro (looks him up and down). But how's this? You look but poorly, my good BENEDICK.

Benedick. I am passing well, my Lord.

Don Pedro. And your wife, the fair BEATRICE? As witty as ever?

Benedick (grimly). Quite!

Don P. (rubbing his hands). I felt sure of it! I made the match, remember! I said to old LEONATO "She were an excellent match for BENEDICK" as soon as I saw her.

Benedick (sighing). So you did, so you did.

Don P. (puzzled). I'm bound to say you don't seem particularly happy.

Benedick (evasively). Oh, we get on well enough.

Don P. Well enough! Why, what's the matter, man? Come, be frank with me.

Benedick (impressively). My dear Lord, never marry a witty wife! If you do, you'll repent it. But it's a painful subject. Let's talk of something else. How's CLAUDIO? I thought we should see him—and HERO—with you.

Don P. (looking slightly uncomfortable). CLAUDIO is—er—fairly well.

Benedick. Why, what's the matter with him? His wife isn't developing into a wit, is she?

Don P. No. She's certainly not doing that!

Benedick. Happy CLAUDIO! But why aren't they here then?

Don P. (coughing nervously). Well, the truth is CLAUDIO's marriage hasn't been exactly one of my successes. You remember I made that match too?

Benedick. I remember. Don't they hit it off?

Don P. (querulously). It was all CLAUDIO's suspicious temper. He never would disabuse his mind of the idea that HERO was making love to somebody else. You remember he began that even before he was married. First it was me he suspected. Then it was the mysterious man under her balcony.

Benedick. You suspected him too.

Don P. That's true. But that was all

my brother JOHN's fault. Anyhow, I thought when they were once married things would settle down comfortably.

Benedick. You were curiously sanguine. I should have thought anyone would have seen that after that scene in the church they would never be happy together.

Don P. Perhaps so. Anyhow, they weren't. Of course, everything was against them. What with my brother JOHN's absolute genius for hatching plots, and my utter inability to detect them, not to speak of CLAUDIO's unfortunate propensity for overhearing conversations and misunderstanding them, the intervals of harmony between them were extremely few, and, at last, HERO lost patience and divorced him.

Benedick. So bad as that? How did it happen?

Don P. Oh, in the old way. My brother pretended that HERO was unfaithful, and as he could produce no evidence of the fact whatever, of course CLAUDIO believed him. So, with his old passion for making scenes, he selected the moment when I and half-a-dozen others were staying at the house and denounced her before us all after dinner.

Benedick. The church scene over again?

Don P. No. It took place in the drawing-room. HERO behaved with her usual dignity, declined to discuss CLAUDIO's accusations altogether, put the matter in the hands of her solicitor, and the decree was made absolute last week.

Benedick. She was perfectly innocent, of course?

Don P. Completely. It was merely another ruse on the part of my amiable brother. Really, JOHN's behaviour was inexcusable.

Benedick. Was CLAUDIO greatly distressed when he found how he had been deceived?

Don P. He was distracted. But HERO declined to have anything more to do with him. She said she could forgive a man for making a fool of himself once, but twice was too much of a good thing.

Benedick (frowning). That sounds rather more epigrammatic than a really nice wife's remarks should be.

Don P. She had great provocation.

Benedick. That's true. And one can see her point of view. It was the publicity of the thing that galled her, no doubt. But poor CLAUDIO had no reticence whatever. That scene in the church was in the worst possible taste. But I forgot. You had a share in that.

Don P. (stiffly). I don't think we need go into that question.

Benedick. And now to select the hour, after a dinner party, for taxing his wife with infidelity! How like CLAUDIO! Really, he must be an absolute fool.

Don P. Oh, well, your marriage doesn't seem to have been a conspicuous success, if you come to that.



Talkative Old Lady (drinking a glass of Milk, to enthusiastic Teetotaler, who is doing ditto). "YE^s, SIR, SINCE THEY RE BEG'N POISONING THE BEER, WE MUST DRINK SOMETHING, MUSTN'T WE?"

Benedick (savagely). That's no great credit to you, is it? You made the match. You said as much a moment ago.

Don P. I know, I know. But seriously, my dear BENEDICK, what is wrong?

Benedick (snappishly). BEATRICE, of course. You don't suppose I'm wrong, do you?

Don P. Come, that's better. A spark of the old BENEDICK. Let me call your wife to you, and we'll have one of your old encounters of wit.

Benedick (seriously alarmed). For Heaven's sake, no. Ah, my dear Lord, if you only knew how weary I am of wit, especially BEATRICE's wit.

Don P. You surprise me. I remember I thought her a most amusing young lady.

Benedick (tersely). You weren't married to her.

Don P. But what is it you complain of?

Benedick. BEATRICE bores me. It is all very well to listen to sparkling sallies for ten minutes or so, but BEATRICE sparkles for hours together. She is utterly incapable of answering the simplest question without a blaze of epigram. When I ask her what time it is, she becomes so insufferably facetious that all the clocks stop in disgust. And once when I was thoughtless enough to enquire what there was for dinner, she made so many jokes on the subject that I had to go down without her. And even then the soup was cold!

Don P. (quoting). "Here you may see BENEDICK, the married man!"

Benedick. Don't you try to be funny too! One joker in a household is quite enough, I can tell you. And poor BEATRICE's jokes aren't always in the best of taste either. The other day, when the Vicar came to lunch he was so shocked at her that he left before the meal was half over and his wife has never called since.

Don P. My poor BENEDICK, I wish I could advise you. But I really don't know what to suggest. My brother could have helped you, I'm sure. He was always so good at intrigue. But unfortunately I had him executed after his last exploit with CLAUDIO. It's most unlucky. But that's the worst of making away with a villain. You never know when you may need him. Poor JOHN could always be depended upon in an emergency of this kind.

Benedick (gloomily). He is certainly a great loss.

Don P. Don't you think you could arrange so that BEATRICE should overhear you making love to someone else? We've tried that sort of thing more than once in this play.

Benedick (acidly). As the result has invariably been disastrous, I think we may dismiss that expedient from our minds. No, there's nothing for it but to put up with the infliction, and by practis-

ing a habit of mental abstraction, reduce the evil to within bearable limits.

Don P. I don't think I quite follow you.

Benedick. In plain English, my dear Lord, I find the only way to go on living with BEATRICE is never to listen to her. As soon as she begins to be witty I fall into a kind of swoon, and in that comatose condition I can live through perfect coruscations of brilliancy without inconvenience.

Don P. Does she like that?

Benedick. Candidly, I don't think she does.

Don P. Hold! I have an idea.

Benedick (nervously). I hope not. Your ideas have been singularly unfortunate hitherto in my affairs.

Don P. Ah, but you'll approve of this.

Benedick. What is it?

Don P. Leave your wife, and come away with me.

Benedick (doubtfully). She'd come after us.

Don P. Yes, but we should have the start.

Benedick. That's true. By Jove, I'll do it! Let's go at once. *[Rises hastily.]*



Don P. I think you ought to leave some kind of message for her—just to say goodbye; you know. It seems more polite.

Benedick. Perhaps so. *(Tears leaf out of pocket-book).* What shall it be, prose or verse? I remember CLAUDIO burst into poetry when he was taking leave of HERO. Such bad poetry too!

Don P. I think you might make it verse—as you're leaving her for ever. It seems more in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion.

Benedick. So it does. *(Writes.)*

Bored to death by BEATRICE's tongue
Was the hero that lived here—

Don P. Hush! Isn't that your wife over there in the arbour?

Benedick (losing his temper). Dash it all! there's nothing but eaves-dropping in this play.

Don P. Perhaps she doesn't see us. Let's steal off, anyhow, on the chance.

[They creep off on tip toe (R) as BEATRICE enters with similar caution (L).]

Beatrice (watching them go). Bother! I thought I should overhear what they were saying. I believe BENEDICK is really running away. It's just as well. If he hadn't, I should. He had really grown too

dull for anything. *(Sees note which BENEDICK has left)* Ah, so he's left a message. "Farewell for ever," I suppose. *(Reads it. Stamps her foot)* Monster! If I ever see him again I'll scratch him!

Curtain.

ST. J. H.

AN APOLOGY.

[At the O. P. Club dinner, the chairman, Mr. CECIL RALEIGH, repeated his well-known views as to SHAKESPEARE as a dramatic 'blackleg' who was a grossly unfair competitor in the market. Speaking of Mr. TREE, he said that as a manager he had given London a most remarkable series of plays, with only occasionally regrettable lapses into SHAKESPEARE.]—Daily Chronicle.]

Shade of Shakspeare speaks:

WHAT's this I hear? New charges swell
In ever, ever blackening lists.

A blackleg I, that undersell

Legitimate trades-unionists,

And so reduce to next to zero

Profits of GRUNDY, JONES, PINERO?

Ye modern masters of an art

Wherein a humble 'prentice I,

I, Sirs, have played no pushful part

Nor sought a cheap publicity:

If I am acted, blame not me,

But Messrs. BENSON, WALLER, TREE.

I know my place. Nor would I claim

A rank to which I cannot rise;

My work I would not think to name

Beside *The Wisdom of the Wise*:

What is the coarse and clumsy wit

Of my poor clowns compared with it?

My simple Muse made no pretence

Of more ambitious problem play;

I wrote no *Mrs. Dane's Defence*

Nor *Second Mrs. Tanqueray*;

Such masterpieces find no rivals

Among my out-of-date survivals.

My lyrics have been praised, I'm told;

I know them dress, a base alloy

Beside the pure refined gold

Of *Geisha*, *Circus Girl*, *San Toy*,

And humbly bows my Muse before a

Great work of art like *Florodora*.

True, one there is to whom some say

A faint resemblance I can boast;

More kind than critical are they

That would so honour this poor ghost,

And fondly claim to have him reckoned

To that great mind a distant second.

Great mind—so great that my poor claim

To sire this prodigy of TREE's

Has fired the emulative flame

Of easy-going SOPHOCLES

To challenge my pretence and find

The prototype in his own mind.

And he who once would not contest

With ÆSCHYLUS, but kissed him—lo!

He argues with a fiery zest

Till Hades rings again as though

EURIPIDES, the metre blunderer

Did wrangle with the mighty Thunderer.

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

It is curious to read in Captain CAIRNE's history of Lord Roberts as a Soldier in Peace and War (HODDER AND STOUGHTON), that the veteran soldier who has returned unscathed from an arduous campaign to gallantly face the subtler perils of a succession of banquets was a delicate youth. Up to his eighteenth year, we are told, he was not only small (he has scarcely yet got over that), but suffered from recurrent attacks of faintness, behind which heart disease was suspected. His parents were in doubt as to whether it was safe for him to sojourn in a tropical climate. But BOBS had made up his mind to be a soldier as his father was, and in February, 1852, set out for India, modestly bearing a commission as Lieutenant in the Bengal Artillery, then in the service of the East India Company. Captain CAIRNE is at the disadvantage of appearing in the field after Lord ROBERTS filled it with his own fascinating account of what he did and saw during his forty-one years' residence in India.

Per contra, he has the opportunity of bringing into fuller light some episodes Lord ROBERTS's modesty tended to obscure. On the whole, my Baronite finds in the volume an excellent record of a stirring career. In his advance on Cabul, in his even more famous march to Kandahar, is seen the same alert, capable, when the moment comes, audacious Captain known in nearer times in South Africa. In the earlier stages of his service Lord ROBERTS was, as he has shown himself in later times, tireless in his care for the well-being of the private soldier under his command. In India as in South Africa, foot and horseman, they all love BOBS.

In *Number One and Number Two* (MACMILLAN & Co.) "F. M. PEARD" — that is, not Field-Marshal — but FRANCES MARY, PEARD (whether "Mrs. or Miss" this Deponent, i.e., the Baron, knoweth not) — has given us a simple, but thoroughly interesting story, always brightly, and, in many instances, brilliantly written. Truly, in literature, an exquisite art is simplicity! The scene being laid in Egypt, the authoress had given herself every chance of filling her pages with artistic descriptions of a vivid Eastern character. "But in spite of all temptations"

FRANCES MARY has never strayed away from the straight path of narration, and whenever it leads her through picturesque places at witching times she has, with perfect touch, briefly and graphically described these scenes after the manner of one to whom the peculiarities of Eastern travel and its weird beauties are quite familiar. It is the best novel of dramatic

dialogue the Baron has read for some time. The only situation of anything like a sensational character seems to have been decided upon by the clever authoress in a hurry. She wanted to jerk her two estranged lovers together, to throw them forcibly into one another's arms, and how could this end be better attained than by the sudden appearance on the scene of a runaway horse "urging on his wild career," and, *en passant*, kicking the hero, who has saved the heroine, into the latter's embrace! 'Tis ending a comedy of real life with a "turn" in a circus. This blot is irritating only because all the rest is so particularly good. Up to this stage, and immediately after it, when the mischief is done, 'tis all FRANCES MARY, in stalls, boxes, and dress circle, but this

situation is decidedly "Fanny Polly," in gallery, "upper suckle," and pit.

THE BARON DE B. W.

THE LESS THE CASH, THE MORE THE COURAGE.

(A story for the incredulous.)

THE hero stood ready to attempt the forlorn hope. Hitherto, he had not been particularly distinguished for his courage. He had been sparing in his stock of ammunition. Over and over again, when he might have used his revolver to advantage, he had been supine.

"And you have decided to cover yourself with glory?" asked his subaltern.

"Yes; glory is better than a threadbare coat?"

"And you have no cartridges?"

"No," replied the hero, bitterly. "I cannot afford to get any."

"My friend," said the subaltern. "This is the supreme moment. Why, my dear friend, are you courting certain death?"

"Because, to tell you the truth," calmly replied the hero, "on my wretched pay I cannot afford to live!"



THE NOBLE GAME.

(A vision of the near future.)

WITH great astonishment the Veteran Cricketer read in his daily paper that his old county, Loamshire, was engaged in a three days' match with Little Puddleton. What in the world was the meaning of the fact that one of the finest elevens in England was playing against a village team? Determined to get to the bottom of the mystery, he rushed off to the County ground, sat down in the enclosure, and put his question to the spectator occupying the next chair.

"Why," said the spectator, "it will take us all our time to beat Little Puddleton nowadays. Look at the telegraph—they've got 300 for one wicket already."

The Veteran Cricketer, however, was watching the play intently. "But, good Heavens, look at the bowling!" he exclaimed. "Who on earth is that man sending down underhand full-pitches to leg?

What's become of SCATTERBAIL? And where's TWISTER? I don't see one of our usual bowlers!"

The stranger smiled compassionately. "You seem unaware, Sir," he said, "that the county captains have held a meeting since the close of last season, and the result is that the game is considerably altered. Two witnesses deposed that they had seen SCATTERBAIL, when a boy of ten, deliver an unfair ball. Once a thrower, always a thrower, is the captains' maxim. Consequently, SCATTERBAIL is forbidden to play."

"But how about TWISTER?" enquired the Veteran Cricketer. "No one in England has a fairer delivery than his!"



UNKIND.

The Bobbitts hired a turn-out for a drive into the country, and Mrs. B. drove.
Mr. B. "I UNDERSTOOD YOU TO SAY, MARIA, THAT YOU KNEW HOW TO DRIVE!"

"Quite so," assented the other. "TWISTER's delivery has been perfectly fair—up to the present. But, as the captains argued, what guarantee is there that, if he were still permitted to play, he might not take to throwing in the future? Practically none. So, as TWISTER had taken many of their wickets last season, and it

Cricketer remarked. "Stay, though—I see one familiar face—that's NIMBLE, sure enough. But why on earth is the smartest cover-point in the world put to field at deep long-on?"

"He was too smart," rejoined the other. "Such exceptional agility was thought likely to disconcert the batsman, which would be obviously unfair. Therefore, the county captains—"

"Rubbish! Nonsense!" interrupted the Veteran Cricketer. "Preposterous tomfoolery! County captains, indeed! What is the M.C.C. doing?"

His companion smiled. "That," he said, "is what a good many people are asking."

A. C. D.



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Widow's Mournful Burial

“Requiescat!”

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.—JANUARY 30, 1901.

